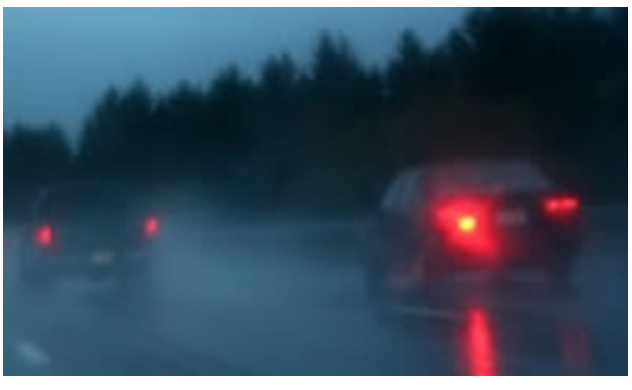
Heavy rain set to bring disruption to Christmas getaway



20 December 2012 - Met Office forecasters are predicting further wet and windy weather in the run up to the festive period, with South West England, South Wales and parts of eastern Scotland particularly at risk.

The Met Office and the Environment Agency are advising the public to stay aware of the latest forecasts and warnings, and be prepared for possible travel disruption and flooding as the rain falls onto already saturated ground.

Much of the UK will see persistent rain and strong winds today, with particularly heavy rain for parts of eastern Scotland where there could be as much as 80 mm. Strong southeasterly winds may also bring the risk of coastal flooding here, with some snow falling over the higher mountains too.

Steve Willington, Met Office Chief Forecaster, said: "Further active frontal systems will move across the UK over the next few days and we could see rainfall mounting up to more than 100 mm in parts of South West England and parts of eastern Scotland by the end of the weekend.

"The Met Office has issued severe weather warnings which means that the public should plan ahead to take account of possible travel delays or disruption, especially as they make their way to friends and family for the Christmas period. By thinking ahead the public can be more weather aware and better prepared for severe weather."

John Curtin, Head of Incident Management at the Environment Agency, said: "Our teams are out around the clock to minimise the risks and prepare for flooding, clearing drainage channels and ensuring that flood defences are working properly.

"We would urge people in at risk areas to keep up to date with the latest situation by checking the Environment Agency website and remain prepared for flooding in their area by signing up to receive free flood warnings.

"With a very busy travel weekend coming up, we would also ask that people check their route before travelling, and remember not to drive or walk through flood water."

Further heavy downpours are expected to spread from the South West later on Friday and into Saturday, with rainfall amounts reaching a further 20 to 30 mm in places but possibly in excess of 50 mm for parts of Scotland.

Darron Burness, the AA 's Head of Special Operations, said: "The run-up to Christmas is one of the busiest times of the year for traffic so any bad weather can have a big impact on the roads. Even if you know your local roads, don't be complacent, as flash flooding is a real risk with so much water around. Keep tuned to local weather forecasts from the Met Office and travel reports and if it's bad where you are, only travel if it's essential. If you do head out, allow more time for your journey as you don't want to rush in conditions like this."

Simon Sheldon-Wilson, Highways Agency Traffic Management Director, said: "We are doing everything we can to ensure our roads are affected as little as possible by the adverse weather. But we urge road users to play their part by checking weather forecasts and traffic conditions before they set out, to plan their route, allow plenty of time for their journeys and drive with extra care.

"A routine incident or breakdown can become much more serious in severe weather. Broken down vehicles can cause delays for other road users and put unnecessary demands on the work of our traffic officers at this busy time of year"

The public can keep up to date with the latest forecasts and warnings for their area on our website and mobile apps and through forecasts on TV and radio during this unsettled spell.

SEPA Floodline

Environment Agency Floodline

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